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ABSTRACT

The Black Gold Cooperative Library System, an affiliation of six public libraries in southern California, and the Total Interlibrary Exchange, a gorup of 31 private libraries of all types, have mutually pledged tp assist each other by sharing collections and by supporting a centralized information center. Member libraries are given access to the libraries at the University of California at Santa Barbara, and each member library also agrees to open its collection to other member libraries. The central information center processes all interlibrary loans. (EMH)

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IT'S WORKING!
TIE (TOTAL INTERLIBRARY EXCHANGE): A LIBRARY NETWORK IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA THAT IS REALLY WORKING

Jane Barker Haas

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I felt very lucky to have secured the job of librarian for a small company in Santa Barbara, California in March 1973. Jobs for librarians were not at all plentiful and certainly not in the beautiful city of Santa Barbara. I was the first professional librarian to be hired at Oceanographic Services, although the company library had been partially maintained in the past by various and sundry persons. When I assumed my position, the library could easily have fit the description of a home in the classified ads: "needs lots of TLC" or "waiting for your creative touch."

In looking through the file drawer of my desk, I came upon a thick folder marked Total Interlibrary Exchange--TIE. It contained announcements and minutes of past meetings. My first reaction was: Good heavens! Who saved all this old stuff? But as I started to read, I realized that this folder contained the history of an idea called TIE.

An Idea Called TIE

On September 15, 1970 a group of 43 librarians temporarily assuming the name of Black Gold Associates, met for the first time in Santa Barbara, California to discuss interlibrary cooperation. The parent organization, the Black Gold Cooperative Library System, had been established in 1964 as a cooperative system among public libraries in a 3-county area in southern California. The 6 public libraries involved were

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sharing not only their collections through the use of a book catalog, but centralized cataloging and reference services as well. The Black Gold Information Center (BLIC) was begun in 1968 to serve as the reference center for the ccoperating libraries. The group of Black Gold Associates (representing 31 libraries of all types) was hoping to become a part of the Black Gold System. It soon became apparent, however, that this would not be possible. Due to a legal technicality concerning state funds the two groups had to remain separate. But, the Black Gold System could administer funds to the Associates. This called for a name change and the Associates appropriately settled on the acronym TIE for Total Interlibrary Exchange.

Surprising as it may seem, there was at first some confusion over exactly what total interlibrary exchange meant. And how could there possibly be an equal exchange between libraries? In spite of this initial hesitation TIE got off the ground and off to an enthusiastic start.

It was but a half year later that the first hint of financial trouble came. A brief statement in the minutes of the March 23, 1971 TIE meeting read:

> The reduced funding for HEW (and public libraries) in the proposed federal budget is of great concern. Write your representatives expressing your feelings.

A two-year battle for federal and state funds for the growing TIE program ensued. TIE had been originally funded entirely under Title III, Library Services and Construction Act. When funding was cut drastically it was in desperation that TIE turned to its members for financial support.

What's In It For Us?

"What's in it for us?" This is the question my company most commonly asks me when it comes to large expenditures of money. And so they wanted an answer when the invoice from TIE arrived for $150--the annual membership fee for a special library.

We are a small company of 25 employees--oceanographers, meteorologists, climatologists, marine biologists and marine geologists. We have a small library--2,000 books and technical reports, about 600 maps, and approximately 50 periodical titles. We must of necessity go outside our four walls for alot of the information we need. As an example of how TIE works for us, let's trace the steps of a request for material originating at Oceanographic Services.

1. The Senior Oceanographer fills in one of my newly devised request forms and checks the blank "borrow."
2. If, after checking our card catalog, I verify that the publication is indeed not in our collection, I take the request with me on my weekly trip to the Sciences-Engineering Library at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The university library is a TIE member and really the cornerstone of the organization. Unfortunately, the publication is not in the holdings of the university library. (Their million volume collection usually serves us very well.)
3. Back at my desk, I call a local company whose library is also a TIE member and whose business is similar to

ours. Alas, no luck here either.

4. But I'm not really out of luck because there is the Black Gold Information Center (BLIC), which serves TIE as well as the Black Gold System. Located at the Santa Barbara Public Library, a mere four blocks from Oceanographic Services, I have easy access to BLIC either "in person" or by phone or mail.

5. Upon receipt of my request, BLIC, being more familiar with the collections of the 85 TIE member libraries, may contact other libraries in the network in an attemp to fill my request. If no other library can help, BLIC takes interlibrary cooperation a step further and goes outside the network.

6. BLIC's first step is often a TELEX to the California State Library Service to Industry located in Sacramento. The California State Library has a good collection of science and engineering materials and they also have a direct line to UCLA's library. Neither place has what we need this time.

7. The next step may be to check the National Union Catalog, or the Union List of Serials to find possible locations of the requested material.

8. At this point, if they have not yet met with success, the four librarians at the information center put their heads together. They may "take a stab in the dark" and contact a library anywhere in the country that they think might be able to help. Sometimes a chain of referrals results.

9. At last the item is located! The owner agrees to loan the publication and mails it to the Black Gold Information Center. BLIC, in turn, delivers it to Oceanographic Services with a notice of due date.

Alot of work has gone into one request. Not all requests will be as time consuming. In addition to tracking down a particular item, BLIC also researches reference questions which might involve longer and more complicated searches. Obviously, I save alot of time by turning requests over to the information center. And too, more doors are open to an established reference center than would be open to a single special library. One special librarian in the network estimated the services of the information center to be worth at least $1,000 a year to his library.

Another interesting bonus of the TIE system is that by going through the information center, the identity of the requesting library is protected. So, in effect, competiting companies can and do exchange information (horrors!), usually without knowing it.

Last, but not least on the list of TIE benefits, is the feeling of comradery that exists among librarians in the TIE network. The three TIE meetings a year provide an excellent forum for the exchange of ideas--especially for the special librarian who is often isolated from the rest of the library profession.

What's In It For TIE?

Having answered "What's in it for us?", the next question is: "What's in it for TIE?" In looking at the Black Gold Information Center's statistics for September 1973-September 1974--and it's almost embarrassing--I wonder what's in it for TIE.

	Requests to BLIC	Materials Recd thru BLIC	Photocopies Recd thru BLIC	Materials Loaned to BLIC	Photocopies Supplied to BLIC
Oceanographic Serv. Inc.	79	39	462		3

From 79 requests submitted to BLIC, we received 39 pieces of material on loan, and 462 pages of photocopies to keep. In return, our library supplied the information center i.e.,other TIE libraries with 3 pages of photocopies. Of what value is it to have Oceanographic Services' library in the TIE network? Our membership fee is more than consumed by the number of work hours put into our requests. (I've been informed that ours are some of the most difficult requests.) However, by paying our membership fee, we are not only subscribing to the services of the information center, but we are also pledging the cooperation of our library. I am willing to help any other library or individual as long as it does not interfere with service to my own library users. Even though most of the libraries in TIE receive more than they give, one important statistic is that about half of the photocopies requested by TIE members are provided by other TIE libraries. In this informal network the important thing is not how much any one library gives or receives, but each member's willingness to cooperate.

Future Plans, Hopes, Dreams

What's in the future for an interlibrary cooperative system like TIE?

It is hoped that as other systems like TIE become successful around the state, ~~that~~ there will be direct links and cooperation between their information centers. Another likely possibility is that the Black Gold Information Center will gradually have access to data bases. This would mean that small libraries like ours would have access, through BLIC, to such data bases as DDC, NASA, NTIS, GEOREF, etc. From here, the dream of a national library or information network does not seem impossible.

Isn't it funny that the idea of interlibrary cooperation is still difficult to comprehend. Perhaps it is because librarians in the past all too often hoarded their collections. If interlibrary cooperation is difficult for librarians to understand, it is even harder for oceanographers, marine biologists, etc. to understand. Occasionally my patrons ask me questions about TIE. I try to explain this idea of libraries borrowing from other libraries, but somehow the idea is not clear. One of my patrons came very close to the concept when he exclaimed, "Boy! That TIE library has everything."

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